

Exotic Sexuality: Examining the Effect of Exotic Dancing on Women's Sexuality

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Exotic dancing has been studied widely throughout the social sciences. Many scholars, such as Bernadette Barton and Katherine Frank, have argued that women become exotic dancers because they are suffering from repetition compulsion, causing them to follow intimacy scripts in both work and personal relationships. However, these arguments have not adequately addressed the issue of how working as an exotic dancer may affect the sexuality of the dancers or their sexual interest in other women. This rarely acknowledged issue was of particular importance throughout this study, examining and comparing the participatory sexual encounters before becoming a dancer to the participatory sexual encounters after becoming a dancer. Through ethnographic and empirical research, I have determined that working as an exotic dancer does cause a change in the dancers' sexual interest in other women, as well as the level of sexual encounters the dancers are involved in their personal lives.

Introduction

Since the 1960's, exotic dancing has been the focus of academic inquiry (Weitzer, 2000, Hardy, Kingston, and Sanders, 2010), exploring broad areas such as exploration and empowerment, dancer motivation, dancer and customer interactions, and the stigma associated with exotic dance (Hardy, Kingston, and Sanders, 2010). From these broad areas, research began to focus on three concentrated areas of study related to either the dancers or the dancers and customers.

Regarding the dancers, researchers began to pay attention to the motivation behind becoming a dancer (Hardy, Kingston, and Sanders, 2010), the identities that were formed when dancing and how these related to the dancers lives outside of work (Rambo-Ronai, 1992, Reid et al., 1994, Wesely, 2003), different types of working conditions the dancers faced (Holsopple, 1999, Maticka-Tyndale et al., 1999 and 2000, Lewis et al., 2005), interactions between dancers and proper etiquette (Rambo-Ronai and Ellis, 1989, Pasko, 2002, Colosi, 2008), the stigma associated with exotic dancing and the different forms of stigma management used (Thompson and Harred, 1992 and 2003, Bradley, 2007), and to what degree exotic dancing impacts the lives of the dancers (Wesely, 2002, Deshotels and Forsythe, 2005, Barton, 2006, Frank, 1998, Barton, 2007). When researching the interactions between dancers and customers, researchers focused on customer and dancer typologies (Brewster 2003, Enck and Preston, 1988, Ericson and Tewksbury, 2000, Montemurro et al., 2003), gender-power relations (Wood, 2000, Wesely, 2002, Murphy, 2003, Bott, 2006), customer and dancer relations outside of work (Frank, 2002, Egan, 2006a), and “counterfeit intimacy” (Boles and Garbin 1974b, Enck and Preston, 1988, Pasko, 2002). Through these new areas of study, researchers were able to add many important details about exotic dancing and the women who participate in this profession.

Within the research done, several different ideas and theories have been explored. Some academics took a Bourdieusian approach, saying that gender capital created a “better understanding of the interrelationship between gender, class and occupation” (Huppatz, 2012) and this motivated some women to pursue work as an exotic dancer (Huppatz, 2012). The idea of gender capital created a notion of “class making.” Class making is a “dialect between class dispositions and class positions” that places limits on the social and mental structures and is based on hierarchal social notions that society consists of “us and them” (Huppatz, 2012, Colosi,

2008). Some academics think that dancers use this approach to distance themselves from both the positive and negative aspects of dancing so that illusions in their personal lives are not created. Over time, some women relax the limits they had previously made, creating a disconnection between their body and identity. By doing this they learn to “negotiate, forget, disassociate, and numb themselves” (Bowen & Daniels, 2013) to situations happening within their job. These dissociative behaviors are also used in situations where the women’s personal lives might relate to their work lives and vice versa. This relaxation of limits often leads the women to work harder to create a distance between work and personal life, causing many dancers to experience “emotional drain.” Emotional drain is often experienced by women who work in the sex industry if their work life is allowed to cross over into their personal life or vice versa. This merging of the women’s two separate lives can create resentment in the women if they are unable to create distance between their two lives.

Other academics took an unbiased, or ethnographic, approach when studying exotic dancers, allowing the dancers to teach them about their lives. From this research, many new ideas about exotic dancing were formed. Some researchers found that some of the women were experiencing post-traumatic stress symptoms because of unstable or abusive childhoods or previous negative experiences with men. This research shows that the women who showed signs of post-traumatic stress dealt with their feelings through “repetition compulsion.” Repetition compulsion is a clinical psychology term used to describe survivors of traumatic abuse who choose new situations of similar value so that they can reenact the abuse in order to gain mastery over the original situation, leaving them no longer powerless (Barton, 2006). Observing dancers who demonstrated behaviors such as repetition compulsion created new ideas involving their behavior towards men, such as “counterfeit intimacy.” Counterfeit intimacy is the idea that

exotic dancers give certain customers the impression they are special and allowed to do things that other customers are not allowed to do, such as touching the dancers or possible later sexual intercourse. Researchers believe that dancers who are affected by repetition compulsion use counterfeit intimacy as a way of controlling the situation between themselves and the customers in order to make more money (Wahab et al., 2010). The use of counterfeit intimacy, along with the club rules that regulate and control the interactions between dancers and customers, allow the dancers to “be in control of their sexuality” (Deshotel & Forysth, 2005).

When a woman enters into the sex industry, she enters into a profession that stigmatizes women as drug addicts who are stupid, sleazy hookers or victims of sexual abuse (Tillier & Snyder, 2009). She enters into what is called “dirty work”, work that is “understood to be degrading or disgusting” and is “physically, morally, or socially tainted” (Maven & Grandy, 2010). Over time, the stigmas from this type of work often become focused on the women themselves. Research has shown that many exotic dancers manage these stigmas by “doing gender”, or repositioning the dirty work into new ways that make the work seem honorable or good. Dancers reposition the dirty work through their costumes, facial expressions, make-up, music choices for their performances, body movements, and conversations with customers. (Maven & Grandy, 2010). Researchers say that while doing gender is an important part of exotic dancing, because of the negative social stigmas surrounding exotic dancing and the lowered social class of dancers, it is not enough to reposition the dirty work as good work in the eyes of everyday society (Maven & Grandy, 2010). Because of this, the longer a woman chooses to dance, the more fragile her self-perception grows because she is in an environment that hosts many negative, hurtful, and abusive experiences (Tillier & Snyders, 2009). Many women hide their work as exotic dancers from their family and friends, which can lead to feelings of isolation

because they have no one to discuss the woes of work with. From this isolation, many dancers begin to feel worse about their bodies, their sexuality, their levels of intelligence, and their overall identity (Tillier & Snyder, 2009). Many women begin to experience body image issues because they internalize the customers' subjective opinions, perspectives, and observations about their bodies, causing the women to "view themselves as objects and judge themselves solely on appearance" (Downs et al., 2006). This internalization and judgment often leads to many dancers developing low self-esteem and depression, which prevents the dancers from being able to form close bonds and relationships outside of work. Due to the reverse effects of counterfeit intimacy, the women often feel they are only accepted at work and are respected by their male customers, even though they are objectified and stereotyped. Over time, this objectification may cause some of the women to create rejecting attitudes toward men that could lead to the women searching for more fulfillments from a bisexual or lesbian relationship (Downs et al., 2006).

The above research has broadened the understanding of exotic dancers in many different ways. The research has stated that because of body image issues and depression, some dancers could experience a change in their relationships outside of work. The research has also stated that the relationships of objectification dancers create with their male clients could lead to bisexual or lesbian relationships. However, throughout this time of research, very little attention was placed solely on how exotic dancing affects a dancers sexual interests and whether or not working in this environment affects the dancer's sexual interest in other women. In 1969, Charles H. McCaghy and James K. Skipper Jr. suggested that female exotic dancers adopt a lesbian lifestyle because of convenience related to their choice of employment. Since that study, there have been suggestions that female dancers may form an interest in other women due to exposure to numerous other factors including body image issues, distasteful male interactions, objectification

from male customers, and because it is easier to form relationships with other women (Bernard et al., 2007, Tillier & Snyder, 2009, Downs et al., 2009) . Also during this time, little research has been done regarding how the dancers' actual sexuality is affected by dancing, and if the women who become exotic dancers experience an increase or decline in the amount of sexual activity they participate in. Most of the research conducted in this area has pertained to how relationships with significant others are affected by the women working as exotic dancers and how the women feel about dating men while they are employed as an exotic dancer (Huppertz, 2012, Bradley, 2007, Pasko, 2002).

Through research dating back to 1969, I discovered a gap in the information related to how women's sexuality is affected by exotic dancing. The existing research has focused on why women become exotic dancers, how male customers view the women, the promiscuity of the women, and how dancing has affected heterosexual and familial relationships. My research seeks to enhance past research by adding new, and recent, data to the existing data.

Methodology

After reviewing past literature related to exotic dancing, I noticed a lack of research in the areas of how exotic dancing affects the dancer's sexual interests, whether or not working in this environment affects the dancers' sexual interest in other women, and if there is an increase or decline in the amount of sexual activity the dancers participate in. This absence of information helped me to form the following research questions: "Has working in a sexually-charged environment caused an increase or decrease in the dancer's sexual activity?" "Has the professional environment of the exotic dance club culture created feelings of bisexuality or lesbianism in the dancers?" "How has working as an exotic dancer affected the sexuality, sexual practices, and sexual interests of the women working as exotic dancers?"

The term “exotic dancer” has many synonyms: “stripper,” “stripteaser,” “table dancer,” and “exotic entertainer” to name a few. For the purpose of my research, the term “dancer” will be used to define the women interviewed for this research study.

During the two months of my research I spent three hours per night, three nights per week, for a total of eighteen hours, as a customer purchasing dances and interacting with the dancers. I observed the dancers’ reactions as they interacted with men, female customers, each other, and me as a customer. Observational fieldnotes were used to record the dancers as they performed by themselves, with other dancers, and for women customers. These notes were recorded on my cell phone using password-protected software. The notes were taken in this way so that I appeared to be texting. I did not want the presence of a laptop or a notebook to make the dancers uncomfortable. I also watched very closely for signs that the interactions and dancing styles changed when the dancers were dancing for women. I conducted twenty-two interviews, seven formal and fifteen informal, with the dancers.

During interviews, I focused on learning about the dancers outside of work in their everyday lives, as well as learning about their sexual interests and practices and how being an exotic dancer might have changed these.

Formal interviews were conducted in a place chosen by the dancers and digital recording was used to record all interviews. The digital data was supplemented by written notes that recorded the facial expressions, gestures, emotional reactions, and body language I witnessed during interviews with the dancers. After each interview, I transcribed the information using password-protected transcription software and saved it to my hard drive. Formal interviews took thirty minutes to one and a half hours to complete, depending on the length of the answers.

Informal interviews were conducted while the women were at work. This method of interviewing became an option after several women expressed a desire to participate, but were not comfortable meeting outside their place of employment or being recorded. During informal interviews, the dancers filled out questionnaire forms containing the same information as that of the formal interviews. The questionnaire forms took ten minutes to thirty minutes to fill out, depending on the length of the written answers. These forms were kept in my home office in a locked file. Both formal and informal interviews consisted of the following questions:

Interview 1

Basic

- Tell me about yourself, what are your interests or hobbies? How do you spend your time outside of work?
- Do you prefer to be called an “exotic dancer”, a “dancer”, a “stripper”, an “entertainer”, or something else?
- Where did you work before becoming a/an [exotic dancer, dancer, stripper, entertainer]?
- How old were you when you starting dancing? How old are you now?
- Why did you decide to become an exotic a/an [exotic dancer, dancer, stripper, entertainer]?
- Do you think any woman could be a dancer? Why or why not?
- Are you pleased or dissatisfied with your experience as a/an [exotic dancer, dancer, stripper, entertainer]?
- Do you plan to continue working as a/an [exotic dancer, dancer, stripper, entertainer]?

Body Image

- Before becoming a/an [exotic dancer, dancer, stripper, entertainer], how did you view yourself and your body?
- Since becoming a/an [exotic dancer, dancer, stripper, entertainer], how do you view yourself and your body?

- Do you feel that you are more open and/or comfortable with your body and the expression of your body since becoming a/an [exotic dancer, dancer, stripper, entertainer]?

If yes, has this comfort allowed you to explore new situations in your life?

If no, how has your body image affected new situations in your life?

Interview 2

Sexual Activities

- Are you in a relationship?
- ****IF NOT IN RELATIONSHIP, SKIP**** Does your partner expect you to be more sexual because you're a dancer?
If yes, does this make you feel any negative feelings or pressures?
If no, does that make you feel any negative feelings or pressures?
- Did you have many sex partners before becoming a dancer?
- Has your number of sex partners increased or declined since becoming a dancer?
- Have you had multiple sex partners (threesomes, foursomes, etc.) at one time before becoming a dancer?
- Have you had multiple sex partners (threesomes, foursomes, etc.) at one time since becoming a dancer?
- Do you view yourself as more or less sexual outside of work?
- Has working as a dancer affected how you feel about yourself sexually?
- Does working as a dancer affect your sexual arousal? Do you get aroused while at work by the male customers? By female customers? By other dancers?
- Do you enjoy sexual activities on a regular basis outside of work?
- Do you participate in sexual activities before work?
- Do you participate in sexual activities after work?

Female Customers

- Do female customers make you uncomfortable?

- If female customers are present while working, are they viewed as “customers” or are they seen more as “friends” or as more “understanding” toward you because they are also female?
- Are female customers treated differently, or are they welcomed in the same way, as male customers?
- If a female customer buys you a drink, does this make you uncomfortable?
- Are female customers viewed as more profitable if they are with male customers?
- Will you dance for a woman if she is with male companions? Why or Why not?
- What types of feelings arise when thinking about performing a sexual dance for a woman? How do these feelings make you feel about yourself?
- When performing a dance for a woman, do you change the “style” in which you dance?
If yes, how do you change the style?
If no, why don’t you change the style?

Other Dancers/Relationship

- Do you perform with other dancers on stage?
If yes, do you enjoy these performances?
If no, does performing in such a way disturb you?
- Has being in an environment with other naked women caused you experience a sexual curiosity toward other women? Why or Why not?
- Did you find women, naked or otherwise, attractive before becoming a dancer?
- Do you find women, naked or otherwise, attractive since becoming a dancer?
If yes, how are you attracted and what have you done about the attraction?
If no, why not?
- Have you had sexual relations with other women before becoming a dancer?
If yes, did you enjoy them?
- Have you had sexual relations with other women since becoming a dancer?
If yes, did you enjoy them?
- ****IF PARTICIPANT HAS HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH WOMEN SINCE BECOMING A DANCER**** If you had sexual relations with other women since becoming a dancer, were the other women also dancers?
If yes, why did you choose to have sexual relations with another dancer?

If no, why did you choose to not have sexual relations with another dancer?

- If you are in a heterosexual relationship, but also sexually interested in women, does your partner agree with you having sex with other women?
If yes, does he also participate?
If no, do you have sexual relations with other women in secret?
- If you are not in a relationship, but are sexually interested in both men and women, do you participate in sexual activities with both? How often?
- If you have more than one sexual partner, do your sexual partners know about each other? How do they feel about each other?

Results

Of the twenty-two dancers interviewed, as I expected, almost all of the data collected consisted of mixed feelings, emotions, and preferences about their sexuality, sexual practices, and sexual interest in women. All of the women, however, had similar answers when stating that their appreciation for the female body and the physical beauty of all women had changed, as well as their level of friendship with other women.

All of the dancers interviewed stated that, since becoming a dancer, they have found a new appreciation for the female body and the physical beauty of all women. One dancer summed up the collection of feelings about other women's beauty best by saying:

...before I was a dancer, I didn't really pay much attention to other girls. Some were bitches, some weren't. Since becoming a dancer I have learned that we all have a story that makes us who we are and a person might act a certain way because of what she's been through. This doesn't make her any uglier than anyone else, it makes her unique and it makes her who she is. It makes her an individual. It makes her beautiful in her own way...

When asked about relationships with other women, all of the dancers felt it necessary to elaborate on their friendships first and the importance of these friendships. All of the dancers gave similar responses, stating that:

I never really got along with other girls, but this environment brings us together and we form strong friendships that help us through the things we go through.

Or

We are like a family. I never had any siblings and now I feel like I have a ton of sisters and every girl is different. I know that no matter what I'm going through, there's always someone I can turn to.

Because there was an array of answers, I designed a two-part category system which I used to code for relevant patterns when I correlated the data (see Table-1 in Appendix). The answers given were first placed into a category of either A, B, or C, dependent upon the dancers' sexual interest in women before becoming a dancer. These answers were then divided among the other four categories, lettered D, E, F, and G. Each of these categories contains three to four sub-categories within them, based on the subject matter, and is numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4, dependent upon the participants answer. This system allows me to track how the sexual preferences of the women have changed since they started working as a dancer. Despite some similarities, there were, of course, many more unique experiences among the dancers. The next section will explain my findings, as well as some of the experiences of the dancers.

Before becoming a dancer

Of the three dancers in category A, all stated that they were bisexual before becoming a dancer. These dancers described to me that they knew early on that they had a sexual interest in other women. The twelve dancers in category B stated that they had no sexual interest in women

before becoming a dancer. These women all considered themselves to be heterosexual upon entering into the exotic dancing profession. The seven dancers in category C stated that they were unsure if they had a sexual interest in women before becoming a dancer. These dancers all said that they had questioned having a sexual interest in other women before becoming an exotic dancer, but none had acted on it.

After becoming a dancer

Three dancers were initially placed into category A (sexually interested in women before becoming a dancer). All of the dancers were placed into the sub-category D-1 “Sexually interested in women, have acted on it.” Two dancers were placed into the sub-category G-1 “Sexual preference in women not affected by work environment.” One dancer was placed into the sub-category F-1 “Sexuality affected by work environment.” Two dancers were placed into the sub-category F-2 “Sexuality not affected by work environment.” One dancer was placed into the sub-category E-1 “Less sexual outside of work, participate in less sexual encounters.”

She explained her experience in sexual encounters outside of work as:

...fun, but exhausting and it can be disgusting. Even though I have a steady partner, there are a lot of times that I don't want to be touched in that way. At first, this was hard on our relationship, but he's a pretty sweet guy, and he tries really hard to make me happy.

The other two dancers fit into the category E-3 “More sexual outside of work, participate in more sexual encounters.” One dancer explained her increase in sexual encounters as:

...being in my sexual prime. I'm young and free and I feel like I should experience everything I can.

Twelve dancers were initially placed into category B (not sexually interested in other women before becoming a dancer). After compiling the data, seven dancers were placed into the sub-category D-1 “Sexually interested in other women, have not acted on it.” One of these women expressed an intense desire to “be with another woman” sexually, but explained her lack of sexual contact with another woman as being:

...very shy. I don’t know how to initiate the actions that would take place between us. With a guy it’s different; you could just walk up to a guy and ask him if he wants to have sex. With a girl, I feel like I would have to ask differently. I know I would be offended if someone came up to me like that, so I think she would too.

Three of the dancers were placed into the sub-category D-2 “Sexually interested in other women, have acted on it.” Two of the dancers described various sexual encounters with women to me and both were actively participating in sexual relationships with other women. One of the dancers explained her sexual encounters with other women as:

I never would have considered having sex with a woman before becoming a dancer, but since I have seen how men really act, how could I not develop an interest in women? Women understand more than men what another woman wants.

One of the dancers admitted to having sex with another woman once, but she explained her encounter with a great deal of disgust saying:

...it was a mistake. I thought I wanted to sleep with her because I thought she was really pretty and I liked her personality. I thought that I was gay or bisexual because I felt like this. So one night, after work, I was really drunk and she asked

me to go home with her and her boyfriend. I decided hey, this is my chance!

Everything was cool at first. We kissed and touched each other. Then she went down on me. I really liked it and wanted to try it, so I went down on her. I started to feel weird, I didn't like what I was doing, but I kept doing it. Then she got out a strap-on and I knew I wasn't in a place I wanted to be. I ran out of the bedroom to the bathroom and puked. Then I went home.

Two of the dancers were placed into the sub-category D-1 "No sexual interested in women." Both of these women were very adamant in explaining that they have never had a sexual attraction to other women and they never will. Three were placed into the sub-category E-1 "Less sexual outside of work, no change to their sexual encounters." These dancers said that they did not always feel at their sexiest and they did not always want to have sex with their boyfriends, but they did to make the boyfriends happy.

Six of the dancers from category B were placed into the sub-category "More sexual outside of work, participate in more sexual encounters." These dancers expressed all expressed a new appreciation for their bodies, and said that this made them want to experience more sexual activities with many different people because they were desired.

Three of the dancers from category B were placed into the sub-category E-3 "More sexual outside of work, No change to their sexual encounters." These three dancers were all mothers and married. The dancers said that they felt a boost in their libido since working as an exotic dancer, but because of busy lives, they had no time to act on their increased sexual feelings.

All of the dancers in category B were placed into sub-category F-1 "Sexuality affected by work environment." Each dancer expressed a change in her sexuality since she started working

as an exotic dancer. Some of the dancers were more sexual, some were less. Some of the dancers wanted to have sexual encounters with other women, some were contemplating having a sexual encounter with another woman, and others were having more sexual encounters with men. A few of the dancers admitted to having sexual encounters with more than one person at a time since working as an exotic dancer. One of the dancers explained to me that she had always been sexually interested in other women, but had never had a threesome. She explained that her current boyfriend wants her to be happy in all the choices she makes so she:

...decided to have a purely sexual relationship with [another girl] from work. We got to know each other really well and discovered that we were attracted to each other. I told my boyfriend and he said to go for it. One day she came over when he wasn't home and we started having sex. He came home in the middle of it and I was really worried that he would be upset or feel left out. He wasn't upset at all. I asked [her] if she cared if he joined. She said only if it was something I really wanted. I did, so he jumped in bed with both of us. We've been sleeping together ever since.

Seven of the dancers in category B were placed into the sub-category G-1 "Sexual preference in women affected by work environment." These dancers all felt that working as an exotic dancer had caused them to find a sexual interest in other women, even if some of them had not acted on their feelings. Three of the dancers were placed into the sub-category G-2 "Sexual preference in women not affected by work environment." These three women all had a sexual interest in other women before becoming a dancer. All of these dancers said their sexual interest in other women had not changed since working as an exotic dancer. Two of the dancers were placed into the sub-category G-3 "No sexual preference in women." These two women

were adamant that they had no sexual feelings or interests in other women before becoming an exotic dancer, or since working as an exotic dancer.

Seven dancers were initially placed in category C (unsure if sexually interested in other women). After compiling the data, three of the dancers were placed into sub-category D-1 “Sexually interested in other women, have not acted on it.” One dancer was placed into sub-category D-2 “Sexually interested in other women, have acted on it.” Three were placed into the sub-category D-3 “No sexual interest in women.” These three dancers were unsure if they were sexually interested in other women when they began working as exotic dancers, but after working as exotic dancers, these dancers had all decided that they had no interest in other women. One dancer expressed her explained her feelings, saying:

I always thought other girls were pretty. When I was younger, I thought about dating, and maybe sleeping with other girls, but I never did it and I never told anyone. When I got older, I didn’t really think about it anymore. After I became a dancer I seriously thought about it and realized that I didn’t like women in that way, I just appreciated how pretty other women could be.

Two dancers were placed into the sub-category E-2 “Less sexual outside of work, No change to their sexual encounters.” One of the dancers was placed into the sub-category E-3 “More sexual outside of work, Participate in more sexual encounters.” She described to me that, since she started working as an exotic dancer, she felt like her body looked better and that made her:

...more interested in having sex and experiencing my body in ways that I wouldn’t usually experience it because I like it and I feel like it’s beautiful and in better shape than before...

Four of the dancers were placed in the sub-category E-4 “More sexual outside of work, No change to their sexual encounters.” Three of the dancers were placed into the sub-category F-1 “Sexuality affected by work environment.” Three were placed into the sub-category F-2 “Sexuality not affected by work environment.” One dancer was placed into the sub-category F-3 “Unsure if sexuality affected by work environment.” This dancer said that she never really thought about how she might have been sexually affected because she works as an exotic dancer. She said:

I just go to work, do my thing, and go home. Work is work. It’s just like any other job; you clock out and leave it there.

Two dancers were placed into the sub-category G-1 “Sexual preference in women affected by work environment.” These dancers both said that working in an environment with other naked women has definitely played a part in their sexual interest in other women. Three of the dancers from category C were placed into the sub-category G-3 “No sexual preference in women.” Two dancers were placed into the sub-category G-2 “Sexual preference in women not affected by work environment.” These two dancers both said that any sexual interests they might have for other women were not caused by working as an exotic dancer. One saying:

If I was going to date a woman, I wouldn’t date another stripper. I know how we are and what we do.

The other dancer saying:

I have been a dancer for a while now. I know the ins and outs of this world and there is no way my sexual feelings could ever be influenced by someone who has the same motifs as me. Friends are one thing, lovers are another.

My findings show that out of the twenty-two dancers interviewed, before they began working as an exotic dancer, three were sexually interested in women, twelve were not sexually interested in women, and seven were unsure if they were sexually interested in women.

After working as an exotic dancer, ten of the dancers were sexually interested in other women, but have not acted on it. These dancers were initially placed into the before categories of B and C. Seven of the dancers were sexually interested in other women and have acted on it. These dancers were initially placed into the before categories of A, B, and C. Five of the dancers were not sexually interested in women. These dancers were initially placed in categories B and C. One of the dancers was less sexual outside of work and participated in less sexual encounters. This dancer was initially placed into category A. Five of the dancers were less sexual outside of work and have had no change to their sexual encounters. These dancers were initially placed into the before categories of B and C. Nine of the dancers were more sexual outside of work and participate in more sexual encounters. These dancers were initially placed into categories A, B, and C. Seven of the dancers were more sexual outside of work and have had no change to their sexual encounters. These dancers were initially placed into categories B and C.

Sixteen of the dancers feel that their sexuality has been affected by their working environment. These dancers were initially placed in categories A, B, and C. Five of the dancers feel that their sexuality has not been affected by their working environment. These dancers were initially placed into categories A and C. One dancer is unsure if her sexuality has been affected by this working environment. This dancer was initially placed into category C.

Ten of the dancers feel that their sexual interest in women has been affected by their working environment. These dancers were initially placed into categories A, B, and C. Seven of the dancers feel that their sexual preference in women was not affected by their working

environment. These dancers were initially placed into categories A, B, and C. Five of the dancers continued to have no sexual preference in women. These dancers were initially placed into categories B and C.

Conclusion

In the area I was working, there were fifty-seven exotic dancers. I interviewed twenty-two dancers, or approximately 39% of the population. Of the dancers I interviewed, 05% of the dancers were sexually interested in women before becoming an exotic dancer, 21% of the dancers interviewed were not sexually interested in women before becoming a dancer, and 12% of the dancers were unsure if they were sexually interested in women before becoming a dancer.

The above review of the data shows that 30% of the population of exotic dancers working in this area has developed a sexual interest in women since becoming an exotic dancer. Among the dancers there has been a 100% change in sexual feelings, interests, and encounters. These changes range from participating in fewer sexual encounters, to participating in more sexual encounters due to the direct influence of working as an exotic dancer. 28% of the dancers feel that their sexuality has been affected by their working environment since becoming a dancer. 18% feel that their sexual interest in women has been affected by working as an exotic dancer and that working as a dancer has directly influenced their new found sexual interest in other women. 09% of the dancers were not sexually interested in other women. These dancers maintained throughout the interview that they were not sexually interested in other women and they would never develop a sexual interest in other women. 09% of the dancers said that they were not affected by their working environment. These dancers maintained the notion that they were in control of themselves at all times and they were not ever affected by their job or other people. 02% of the dancers were unsure if their sexuality was affected by their working

environment. These dancers said that they never really thought about whether or not they were affected.

From these findings I conclude that, in the area I conducted my research, a connection can be made between working as an exotic dancer and changes to the dancers' sexual preferences and lifestyles. During my two months of research I focused my study solely on the dancer's sexuality, both because of time constraints and because the participant population in my demographic area is largely Caucasian. Approximately 08% of dancers in the research area were African-American, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American and of this 08%, only three dancers agreed to interviews, two being African-American and one being Hispanic. The other nineteen participants were Caucasian. Because of the predominantly Caucasian participant pool and limited time, I decided to exclude the categories of race and class, as well as socioeconomic standing and participant background. I realize that these factors, as well as the amount of time allowed for research and the size of the participant pool, are vital components to research. In my future research I fully intend on incorporating these factors, which will allow me to add depth to my research and encompass every aspect of the situation affecting the women's lives.

As I conducted my interviews and heard stories of situations that were not directly related to my research, I began to wonder why the dancers choose to stay in this profession if they are dealing with situations of mental, emotional, verbal, and sometimes physical abuse both at work and outside of work. Several of the dancers I interviewed gave me permission to contact them again if I had more questions, so I chose five dancers, one from each club, to contact. I made sure that the dancers worked the same shift so that the data was more accurate. I asked each dancer for a rough estimate of the amount they made per day in stage dance tips and private dances. I was curious if the amount they made was a factor in them dealing with different

systems of abuse. From their information, I calculated the amount made per day, week, and month based on how many hours they worked, on average, per night, per amount of days per week. Each of the dancers informed me that on average, all of the dancers worked five nights per week and everyone was required to work five hours per shift. After making my calculations (see Table-2 in Appendix) I discovered that, on average, exotic dancers in this particular area make about \$5,375.00 per month. I called the dancers back to verify that this was correct. All of the dancers said that they made about \$5000.00 per month after daily tip outs. Learning this answered my question about why the women dealt with the different systems of abuse at work and outside of work. Working in this environment, while it can be negative, allows the women financial freedom to be independent and provide for themselves.

My research adds to past studies by advancing the understanding of how exotic dancing affects the women's sexuality, sexual interests, sexual encounters, and, to some extent, how their financial income is a driving component in their choice to remain an exotic dancer. The data shows that working as an exotic dancer does have an impact on the women's sexuality, who they choose to engage in sexual encounters with, and how frequently the women participate in sexual encounters outside of work, though the outcome was different for each woman. The data also shows that, while some of the women did experience an increase in sexual activity with multiple partners, most of the stereotypes about exotic dancers, that they are whores or lesbians, did not hold true. Though there is far more research to be conducted regarding how women's sexuality is affected by exotic dancing, the outcome of my research is the stepping stone needed to allow society a better understanding of who exotic dancers are sexually, in turn allowing the women a place in society to participate on a more humanized level.

Appendix

Table-1

Table-2

Before Working as an Exotic Dancer		Participant Count
	Sexually interested in women	3
	Not sexually interested in women	12
	Unsure if sexually interest in women	7
After Working as an Exotic Dancer		Participant Count
1	Sexually interested in other women, have not acted on it	(B-7) (C-3)
2	Sexually interested in other women, have acted on it	(A-3) (B-3) (C-1)
3	No sexual interest in women	(B-2) (C-3)
1	Less sexual outside of work, participate in less sexual encounters	(A-1)
2	Less sexual outside of work, no change in sexual encounters	(B-3) (C-2)
3	More sexual outside or work, participate in more sexual encounters	(A-2) (B-6) (C-1)
4	More sexual outside or work, no change in sexual encounters	(B-3) (C-4)
1	Sexuality affected by work environment	(A-1) (B-12) (C-3)
2	Sexuality not affected by work environment	(A-2) (C-3)
3	Unsure if sexuality affected by work environment	(C-1)
1	Sexual interest in women affected by work environment	(A-1) (B-7) (C-2)
2	Sexual interest in women not affected by work environment	(A-2) (B-3) (C-2)
3	No sexual interest in women	(B-2) (C-3)

Average Pay per Month for Exotic Dancers in the Local Area	
Private Dances	
\$20.00/dance x 2/hour = \$40.00/hour	
\$40.00/hour x 5 hour shift = \$200.00/night	
\$200.00/night x 5 nights/week	\$1000.00/week
Stage tips	
\$10.00/dance x 5 dances/night = \$50.00/night	
\$50.00/night x 5 nights/week	
\$1000.00 + \$250.00	
\$1250.00 weekly total	
\$1250.00 per week x 4.3 weeks/month	
\$5375.00/monthly income	